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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002032

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - HIRAAN AND ASWJ LEADERS MEET TO DISCUSS
COOPERATION AGAINST AL-SHABAAB

REF: NAIROBI 1909

Classified By: Counselor for Somalia Affairs Bob Patterson for reasons
1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Hiraan and ASWJ/Galgaduud leaders appear to be forming an alliance to confront al-Shabaab against the backdrop of recent defeats in Beledweyne and frustration at lack of TFG support to the regions. Former Hiraan Governor Ma,ow, who recently resigned from the TFG, reportedly failed to hand over TFG money meant for Hiraan when leaders there refused to join Ma,ow in his declaration of non-support for the TFG. A TFG official from Hiraan told us President Sharif admitted that he made a mistake in giving money to Ma,ow, but has yet to provide additional support to Beledweyne. Hiraan leaders on September 10 met at the regional border town of Mataban with ASWJ leaders and District Commissioners from Galgaduud in order to discuss greater cooperation in fighting al-Shabaab. Our contacts from Hiraan and within ASWJ tell us all agreed to the principle of continued support for the TFG, but also thought the TFG had abandoned their region. We are encouraging the TFG to counter Ma,ow,s messages with strong statements of political support to Beledweyne. We are also encouraging the TFG to ensure that its pledged support to ASWJ extends beyond support to ASWJ militia that share clan affiliation with President Sharif. End summary.

¶2. (C) TFG Member of Parliament (MP) Mohamed Daqane and TFG Police General Mukhtar , during a September 11 call from Beledweyne, told Somalia Unit PolOff about recent events in Hiraan region. According to the Hiraan leaders, the TFG gave former Hiraan Governor Ma,ow over USD 100,000 in advance of Ma,ow,s unexpected August resignation. The TFG reportedly intended for the then-governor of Hiraan to take the money back to support TFG forces in the region. Ma,ow reportedly gave MP Daqane USD 16,000 but failed to hand over the remainder of the money when Daqane and other Hiraan leaders refused to join Ma,ow in his declaration of non-support for the TFG. Daqane told PolOff Ma,ow is now using the remaining money to travel throughout the region and encourage resistance to the TFG. Daqane said President Sharif admitted he gave the money to the wrong person, but has yet to provide any additional support to Beledweyne. (Note: The TFG Security Minister separately told us the TFG had sent USD 80,000 to Mukhtar and then-Hiraan governor Ma'ow for Hiraan troops but that both men misappropriated the funds and only USD 16,000 reached Mukhtar's forces. End Note.) Ethiopia, according to Daqane, recently armed 300 of Mukhtar's previously-unarmed fighters. General Mukhtar said his forces remain in control of the Beledweyne airport and half of one district in western Beledweyne, despite the strategic

withdrawal of most TFG-aligned forces from the town in early September (ref a). Mukhtar said his 1,800 forces require rations and salaries and calculated that his forces would need approximately USD 200,000/month to maintain operations. Mukhtar figured rations and salaries at the rate USD 1/day/person for rations and USD 100/person/month for salaries.

¶3. (C) Daqane, acknowledged the TFG,s lack of financial resources, but opined that political support would also go far in shoring up the morale of local forces. Daqane said he recently spoke to the TFG Minister of Security, who also hails from Hiraan, and asked him to urge the TFG to send a delegation to Beledweyne as a show of political support to TFG-aligned forces and local leaders in the region. Mukhtar said the TFG could land in Beledweyne, since his forces still controlled the airport, or could alternatively arrive via a neighboring airstrip in Dusa Mareb. (Note: The TFG has no internal capacity to travel by air and would have to charter a plane at the going rate of approximately USD 15,000 to make the trip. End note.)

¶4. (C) Daqane told PolOff that he, General Mukhtar and other leaders from Hiraan on September 10 met at the regional border town of Mataban with ASWJ leaders and District Commissioners from Galgaduud in order to discuss greater cooperation in fighting al-Shabaab. (Note : Mataban is regionally located in Hiraan, but socio-culturally more closely aligned with Galgaduud. End Note.) The following ASWJ leaders, primarily from the northern Galgaduud faction of ASWJ, as well as 30 additional ASWJ members were reportedly in attendance: Chairman Sheikh Omar (Hawiye/Murosade), Deputy Chairman Sheikh Abdirizak (Darod/Marehan), and Secretary

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General Mohamed Yusuf (Hawiye/Habr Gedir/Ayr). In addition, local officials and District Commissioners from the following Hiraan and Galgaduud towns were in attendance: Dusa Mareb, Mataban, Guriel, Maxass, Wabho, El Buur, and Galinsor (South Mudug). Daqane said Hiraan leaders began communicating with ASWJ three months ago and that the September 10 meeting was meant to address how the groups could best work together. Daqane said all agreed to the principle of continued support for the TFG, but also thought the TFG had abandoned their regions. Our contacts within ASWJ/north Galgaduud confirmed the meeting and said they agreed to cooperate with Hiraan leaders to defeat al-Shabaab forces.

¶5. (C) Daqane offered two anecdotes to highlight the dual sentiments --support for the TFG and frustration at the TFG-- in the regions. According to Daqane, ASWJ leaders opened and closed the meeting, per Sufi custom, with chanting, dancing, and prayers. The words of the chants and prayers reportedly called on Allah to help strengthen the TFG so it could defeat al-Shabaab. (Note: ASWJ contacts have in the past showed PolOff cell phone video of their forces performing similar chants in advance of ASWJ battles in north Galgaduud. End Note.) At the same time, Daqane said residents in Hiraan are telling him they do not see any evidence that the TFG looks at them any differently than it does its enemies because they do not see political or financial support coming from Mogadishu. Residents told Daqane they resent having to resort to the same desperate measures, such as selling their livestock, as the TFG,s enemies to arm and feed TFG-aligned forces.

¶6. (C) Comment: We see the agreement of cooperation between Hiraan leaders and ASWJ as a positive development. We believe local forces throughout Somalia will continue to fight al-Shabaab, whether or not they are linked to the TFG. However, lack of TFG support will probably cause the defection of some TFG-aligned forces and prevent regional successes over al-Shabaab from translating into victories for the TFG. The combined lack of pledged international support, government incapacity, and lack of political will are depriving the TFG of support in key regions in Somalia. We are encouraging the TFG to counter Ma,ow,s messages with strong statements of political support to Beledweyne. We are also encouraging the TFG to ensure that its pledged support to ASWJ extends beyond support to ASWJ militia that share

clan affiliation with President Sharif.
RANNEBERGER